

The Point

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FSC FILE PHOTO

Orientation leaders put team spirit, friendship and fun on the agenda as a new semester begins.

New here? Follow the leaders

BY JACOB HART

Getting to know your roommates, going out to your first college party, or talking to that really cute girl or guy may be the on the list of priorities to begin your college experience, but don't miss out getting to know your orientation leaders.

Your first experiences with them may feel like a trip back to the past when Ms. Riley, your second-grade teacher, made you play awkward ice breakers. But once you get to know them, you can really learn a lot from them - especially since most of them are considered to be leaders at Fitchburg State College.

"Orientation is a great opportunity to meet many different people and start friendships that may last you years," said Christopher Ashley, who served as an orientation leader in Fall 2007.



FSC FILE PHOTO

Making friends is easy at orientation.

It also offers a great opportunity for the upper classmen who take a highly involved role in the campus to find other

people who may share their own values.

This year's orientation takes place Aug. 31-Sept. 2, and follows the theme "Citizenship in the World."

While a lot of college freshman tend to feel nervous about this new phase of life, orientation can speed up the process of meeting new friends and getting used to new surroundings.

"Orientation is truly one of the best ways to meet people and find people to hang out with," said Nicoletta Amato, one of this year's orientation leaders.

Amato admits that one of the reasons she is an orientation leader is because it looks really good on a resume. But, she said, the main reason is that she loves the experience.

Ashley agreed, saying, "I [became] an orientation leader to give back to the

Continued on Page 3

ConnectEd: good call

BY TIM MCCARTHY

"I want to tell you all that while you were sitting here, you were locked in," Fitchburg State College President Robert V. Antonucci informed incoming freshman and their parents who had come to campus for a summer orientation session on June 10.

He explained that FSC had gone into an emergency, campus-wide lockdown while an armed-robbery suspect was apprehended in one of the Highland Avenue townhouses.

Charges against the suspect - a Fitchburg State College student - were formally dismissed on Aug. 19 in Fitchburg District Court, after a grand jury did not find enough evidence to indict him.

At the time, however, the events of the day provided an excellent test of FSC's ConnectEd emergency-alert system, which passed with flying colors.

Now mandatory for both incoming and returning students, the ConnectEd system calls home, cell and residence-hall phones to inform students, faculty and staff of important announcements. The system has been used at FSC for the past two to three years, but the events of June 10 were the first time the system was used in a "live" emergency situation.

"I think everything went as planned and prepared," said Campus Police Chief James Hamel. "The system did what it needed to do. Both of us, the Campus Police and the local authorities,

Continued on Page 2



ConnectEd puts information right in students' hands.

FSC plows ahead with improvements

BY MIKE PRESCOTT

It is becoming an annual tradition of sorts here at Fitchburg State College: Construction projects are being hastily completed as students make their way to campus for the fall semester.

While the construction may cause some temporary inconvenience, it is intended to bring about lasting improvements to the quality of life - and study - on campus.

"It has been another very busy

summer and hopefully students and staff will notice a number of improvements," said Jay Bry, FSC's assistant vice president of administration.

One of the most visible projects involves a series of renovations to the Hammond Campus Center.

The dining room near the Commuter Cafe has been revamped, with new carpeting, wall paint, and interior finishes.

To top it off, new furniture is

Continued on Page 2



STAFF PHOTO BY MIKE PRESCOTT

Construction equipment has been part of the landscape all summer long, as Fitchburg State College builds for the future.

Freshmen face major issues

BY STEVE SULLIVAN

When you finish high school, your options are pretty clear-cut: You'll either go to college, learn a trade, get a job that requires no skill, or hang around in your parents' basement waiting for the "American Idol" tryouts to come to Boston.

If you choose college, the questions get harder. There's one, in particular, that looms over the heads of most college students: "What am I going to do with this degree when I finish?"

As many students will tell you, it's too important a decision to rush.

"Take your time when you are choosing your major," advised Michael Doherty, a business-administration student at Fitchburg State College. "Go into your first couple of semesters undecided, try out a couple of areas and see what fits you best."

"Myself, I found business to be the perfect fit; I am a people person, can work well with numbers and have a good sense for what will make money."

Some majors will steer you down a straight path from the moment you enter into them.

Majors such as nursing or education will have you on such a strict schedule that you won't even have time to question whether or not they are right for you.

And since these careers are in high demand, you are most likely to have a job waiting for you when you graduate.

But what if you want to go down the creative path?

Jamie Cumming, an FSC film major set to graduate in May 2009, said that will require you to stand out from the crowd.



FSC FILE PHOTO

Students who take time to consider their interests and abilities can find the major that's right for them.

"Film can be a great major and possibly the most fun you can have at school," she said.

"But you'd better be paying attention in class and actually learning the ins and outs of the industry, because the only way you are going to make money is if you are one of the best. Nobody is going to want to hire a mediocre cameraman."

So there you have it - some advice from people who have already been through it,

felt the confusion and asked the questions you may be wondering about right now.

If it all starts to seem overwhelming, though, you can find expert help right on campus. The Academic Advising Center's "Focus on the Future" program is available for students who want to make the right choices about their majors and careers.

Services include career-interest inventories, networking workshops and help in resume preparation. The Career Services

Center is located on the second floor of the Hammond building, and can be reached by calling 665-3151.

Just remember, you are only in college for a small chunk of your life, but what you do here shapes and molds what the rest of your life will become.

A final piece of advice: Have as much fun as you can and make the most out of your experience.

Stepping forward

Continued from Page 1
expected to arrive mid-semester.

On the G-Level of the Campus Center, one of the most noticeable changes has been made, and students are going to walk all over it.

"The most dramatic change in the building is the refurbishment of the quarry tile floor, including the main stairwell," Bry said.

The floors and stairs were systematically cordoned off during July and August to complete the work, and Bry said the results speak for themselves.

"We have had faculty and staff comment that they look better than they did, even when they were new," Bry said.

Though the Campus Center work will be the most visible, parking changes will likely be the most talked-about among students.

Increased surveillance and security have been the focus for Weston, North 1 through 3, Green 1, and McKay Rear and Lower lots, all of which have received (or will be receiving) new lighting, cameras, and/or call boxes this fall.

One new lot has been opened, Green 2, as a result of the college's ongoing local property acquisition. The lot will have a gravel surface this fall, with an

anticipated conversion to pavement in the spring.

North 4 (across from the Recreation Center), which has been a gravel lot for several semesters, is being upgraded to pavement; however, it is also the location of the new Campus Police station. As a result, the lot will likely remain closed this fall as construction continues on the Police Station.

North 3 has been expanded, largely as a result of adjoining property acquisitions by the college; it is now called Congress Lot. In addition, Weston has been reconfigured to a single entry, allowing for a small increase in available spaces.

"All lots are expected to be back on line for use at the start of the semester, even while some of the work continues," Bry said.

Fitchburg State College is, of course, a learning institution, so several improvements have also been made to the actual classroom facilities around campus.

Work has begun in the Conlon Building, including the relocation of Industrial Technology labs, in preparation of a several-phase plan of improvements to the building. Several second-floor classrooms have received makeovers, and by semester's end, they will also receive new "standard issue" tables and roll-



STAFF PHOTO BY MIKE PRESCOTT

Gleaming tile floors are among the improvements recently made on campus.

ing chairs to replace existing tablet-arm chairs, allowing more comfort and space for laptops and books.

The admissions office will also soon have a new home, as construction continues in the Anthony Building on an expanded and more welcoming space, formerly occupied by the grounds crew. Though all of the projects will make FSC more attractive to both current and prospective students, some glitches have

occurred. "With many renovations, there are always unexpected surprises, and in some cases delays," Bry said.

The most significant delay? The renovation of Percival Hall, which includes new bathrooms and Behavioral Science labs. Students in Percival Hall needing restroom facilities will be directed to the nearby Thompson and Anthony buildings until bathrooms are re-opened, likely at the end of September.

College has a lock on safety

Continued from Page 1
have the same training with the system, so everything fell into place."

He did note that while the system has so far been successful, there are still several kinks to iron out.

"We're looking to upgrade call boxes on campus to deliver messages cross-campus," he said.

He also noted that the system currently has no way of notifying visitors to campus of possible threats.

Considering the number of guests on campus that day, Hamel said, "We were fortunate that everyone was in the Hammond Building."

Many of the visitors said they were pleased to see the situation handled in a timely and professional manner.

"The key thing is the security of the college community," Antonucci said. "That's the bottom line."



FSC FILE PHOTO

A visit to the bookstore can result in sticker shock, as students check out the prices on required texts.

Textbooks cost a bundle

BY CHELSEY KILGOUR

With rising prices at colleges everywhere, students are struggling to pay for textbooks. Each semester students go to the college bookstore to get their dreaded book list and are usually cringing at the prices. According to the College Board, the average student pays around \$900 per year for books.

"The textbook prices are outrageous; you pay thousands of dollars in tuition and then end up spending hundreds on textbooks," says Fitchburg State College student Maggie Horgan.

So why are textbook prices sky high? One reason may be that the companies that publish the textbooks produce new editions of each textbook each year, causing students to have to buy brand-new books.

Companies also add extras, such as tutorial CD-ROMs, that have to be sold along with the books, causing the price of the whole package to be higher.

This process is called bundling, and it's gotten the attention of lawmakers across the coun-

"You pay thousands of dollars in tuition and then end up spending hundreds on textbooks."

- Maggie Horgan

try. Several states have passed, or are considering, legislation such as the College Textbook Transparency Act. This would require publishers to also make available "unbundled" versions of the books, minus expensive add-ons such as CD-ROMS.

Also, publishers would be required to provide book prices in marketing materials so professors can choose less expensive books.

In the meantime, with prices on the rise each year, students have been finding ways to cut costs.

Many students advertise books on campus and sell them to other students at cheaper prices. You can also go online and buy used books

from college students throughout the country. Websites such as Amazon, Half.com, ecampus.com, and collegeswap.com allow students to create accounts for free and post their used textbooks online for other students to purchase.

"I always check online as soon as I find out what my textbooks are," Horgan said. "I have found expensive books for as cheap as \$8."

The only downside to getting books for less online is having them come in on time and, with the ever-changing new editions, finding the right book.

"The college bookstore prices are so expensive compared to some of the online prices that colleges are going to end up losing money," said FSC student Jason McDonald.

Most college bookstores do allow you to sell back books at the end of the semester for cash back. However, because a lot of books come out with new editions, the used books aren't used the next year and therefore cannot be sold back.

Mara project leaves some room for relief

BY GARETT LANGER
AND PHIL TRUDEL

When the new addition to Mara Village opens in fall 2009, it will add 125 beds to the residential complex – and draw a sigh of relief from students who have had panic attacks over where they were going to end up with on-campus housing.

It was only a year ago, in 2007, that a new housing policy was enacted that stated that any student who had earned 100 credits or more would not be eligible for on-campus housing.

"That act was terrifying," said Fitchburg State College student Tiffany Begin.

"When I was a sophomore and I heard that, I was thinking to myself, 'That's how they're going to treat their seniors? Throwing them off campus?'"

As of the 2008 school year, the act was repealed and is no longer in effect.

Building and renovation plans, however, are still in effect and going strong.

The new Mara buildings

boast three new complexes, all with interconnecting hallways that make for easy access to neighboring buildings and facilities.

The blueprints have a similar design to the "classic" Mara buildings, but will be updated in interior design and capacity.

"It's nice that they decided to build more Maras," said FSC student Dana Volke.

"Mara is probably the greener side of campus and it's good that housing options over there are going to be more accessible."

However, with all the advantages the new Mara buildings will bring to the college, there have been short-term disadvantages.

"As early as 7 in the morning they start making noise and wake me up," Rob Bartolome of Mara 6 said last semester.

"Even with the windows closed, I still wake up every day they work on the new Maras."



FSC FILE PHOTO

Students find places to gather and relax in the green areas around Mara Village.

Orientation leads the way to fun and friendships

Continued from Page 1
school, because of what the school has given to me."

"Don't be afraid that you're going to look weird or silly hanging out with your orientation group," said Jennifer Corrigan, also an orientation leader this year. "You will remember and know most of those people for the rest of your life."

Ashley, Amato, and Corrigan all had the same advice for incoming freshmen: to be involved in as much as they can, starting with orientation.

A complete schedule of orientation activities and events can be found on the college website, www.fsc.edu.

Highlights include:

Aug. 31 - First Night activities

on the Quad from 8:30 p.m. to midnight

Sept. 1 - New Student Convocation from 10 to 10:30 a.m. in Weston

Sept. 2 - Rotating Interest Sessions on topics including Taste of Fitchburg, Financial Fitness, Building an Online Portfolio, and Life as a Commuter, from 9:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Campus Police mobilize against DUI

Campus Police officers are participating in a statewide mobilization called "Drunk Driving, Over the Limit, Under Arrest," through Sept. 3. The Executive Office

of Public Safety and Security has provided \$725,000 in federal grant funding for this effort to reduce the number of alcohol-related crashes on Massachusetts roads.

FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE

Family Weekend 2008

September 26 and 27

Friday, Sept. 26

Family Weekend Parade

Line-up, lower Weston parking lot at 6:15 p.m.

7 p.m.

This Year's Theme: **Once Upon a Time**

The parade features bands, floats and antique cars. Students, faculty, staff and families are encouraged to participate. Parade Route: Starting on North Street in front of Weston Auditorium, taking rights on Ross Street, Highland Avenue, and Pearl Street, then all the way up North Street, ending at the Civic Center parking lot and Coolidge Park in time for the fireworks.

Annual Fireworks Display

Coolidge Park

8 p.m.

Join the festivities

immediately following the parade as we continue the weekend with a fireworks display set to music!

"Enchanted" Drive-In Movie 8:30 p.m.

Outside of the Landry Ice Rink

After the fireworks, relax on a blanket with the large screen drive-in movie showing of Disney's "Enchanted."

Saturday, Sept. 27

Tailgate Lunch

11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Elliot Field (rain location is Holmes Dining Commons)

Parents, students and guests: Free with ticket



FSC Football

vs. Framingham State College 1:30 p.m.

Elliot Field

Students and Family: Free with One Card and ticket

General Public: \$5

Fun Fair

11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Elliot Field

Student clubs and organizations will be hosting a variety of fundraising booths with giveaways and activities like picture mugs, spin art Frisbees, pony rides, balloon animals, food and more.

Autumn Buffet

5 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Holmes Dining Commons

Parents, families and guests are invited to join Fitchburg State's faculty and staff for music, entertainment and dinner. Admission is \$8.50 per person (free for students on the meal plan). Pay by check with registration form or pay by cash or check at the door.



Women's Soccer

vs. Salem State College

6 p.m.

Elliot Field

Parents, students and guests: Free

The Magic of Mike Super

8 p.m.

Weston Auditorium

Tickets:	Fitchburg State students with One Card	\$7
	Family, faculty/staff and alumni	\$10
	General public and all tickets at the door	\$15

The Magic of Mike Super

Mike Super's Magic & Illusion

Production is the industry's one stop for absolute entertainment! The moment Mike appears on stage, the audience is captivated. Mike takes the venue and transforms it into a gateway for your imagination, thus

creating a totally interactive magic experience.

The audience literally takes part in the show first hand!

Mike will make an audience member levitate 4 and a half feet off the ground with absolutely no connections of any kind. He will control the elements and make it snow from his bare hands. Mike will physically fold a spectator so small they fit into a Japanese show box! He breathes life into a piece of paper and it actually dances in a total stranger's hands—and that's only 10 minutes into the show!

Mike Super has created a show that becomes one highly anticipated event guaranteed to bring the audience to their feet! Imagine how great you'll look by not only bringing in a show with universal appeal, but a show that features digital music, side-splitting comedy, amazing lighting, and unbelievable magic and illusion—all totally immersed in audience participation!

Opening Act:

Dale K: Seriously Funny Hypnosis Show



When you attend one of Dale K's performances, there's anticipation in the air before the curtain even opens. After an informative explanation of what you are about to see, Dale K fills the stage with willing volunteers from the audience. Using simple relaxation techniques, Dale K eliminates any and all stage fright that the volunteers may have. In fact, they become so relaxed that they appear to be in a completely deep sleep.

Although their eyes are shut and bodies relaxed the volunteers are wide awake with open imaginations. It's

at this point that Dale K introduces the "power of suggestion" in an always humorous and unconventional manner. His suggestions allow the volunteers to unleash hidden confidence and talents that propel them into the spotlight for the entire show.



STAFF PHOTO BY NICOLETTA AMATO

College knowledge: Just toss that Tupperware in the trash, and no one will accuse you of leaving dirty dishes in the sink.

You know you're in college when ...

1. Ramen becomes a staple in your diet.
2. You are allowed to have a George Foreman grill but not a toaster.
3. Weekends start on Thursdays.
4. Six in the morning is when you go to sleep, not when you wake up.
5. You know how late fast-food restaurants are open and which ones have 24-hour service.
6. You obsessively log in to Facebook or MySpace.
7. Quarters are a prized possession.
8. You instant message your roommate from a few feet away.
9. Your idea of a square meal is a box of Pop-Tarts.
10. You throw out Tupperware because you don't feel like washing it.
11. You wear flip flops in the shower.
12. You skip a class to write a paper for another one.
13. Bicycles and skateboards are cool again because you can't afford gas.
14. You have paid the same amount for books as you have for tuition, then returned the books unused for the price of a candy bar.
15. You have the local pizza-delivery numbers programmed into your cell phone, as well as the Rejection Hotline and Campus Police.
16. Checking people's away messages becomes a hobby.
17. You only do the laundry when your closet is empty.
18. You have at least one roadside decoration in your room, such as a road cone or street sign.
19. You get more damage bills in the mail than care packages.
20. You spend five or more minutes waiting for the elevator just so you don't have to climb the stairs.

- SARAH TAYLOR

BY TOM RUBENDALL

When first listening to the Mars Volta's 2008 release, "The Bedlam in Goliath," one cannot help but feel completely overwhelmed. Once again, the progressive-rock band has pushed the envelope to an entirely new level.

And local fans will have a chance to explore that new level along with the Mars Volta on Sept. 14, when the band's tour in support of this new CD comes to the Sun Orpheum Theater in Boston.

The CD itself wastes no time getting down to business with the first track, "Aberinkula."

Cedric Bixler-Zavala comes in immediately with his signature high-pitched wail, backed by an intense bass scale, pounding percussion and the sonic, effect-ridden guitar stylings of the band's mastermind, Omar Rodriguez-Lopez.

Rodriguez-Lopez apparently had intensity in mind for this album, because "Goliath" does not let up. After "Aberinkula" finishes with an anthemic guitar riff, "Metatron" begins without a moment's notice and continues for over eight minutes of groovy, distorted bass with a Spanish zest.

"Ilycna" follows as one of the lighter (in terms of mood) songs on the CD, but really showcases the speed and talent of The Mars Volta's new drummer, Thomas Pridgen. His non-stop sticking and intricate fills flirt marvelously with Juan Alderete's funky bass lines, making this album clearly their drum-and-bass album in comparison to their past studio albums: "De-Loused in the Comatorium," "Frances the Mute" and "Amputechture."

The intensity rolls on with the short but powerful single "Wax Simulacra." This is where vocalist Bixler-Zavala puts Geddy Lee to shame with his calculated shrill cries, beautifully orchestrated with Southern horns and even at times dual-tracked, uncommon for the band.

The fifth track is named for Goliath and features some of their best work ever: rock organ tones, mind-bending guitar solos and more intricate bass and drum play.

"Tourniquet Man," the slowest and least interesting song on the CD, is also the shortest, clocking in at 2:38.

But wasting only those two and a half minutes, the band jumps right back into hyper speed with "Calvettas" and then the most unusual piece on the album, "Agadez." Once again, it starts with the drum and bass locked in a creepy groove backed with electronics. Soon Bixler-Zavala comes in with more finely crafted linguistic puzzles:

I should have known
You'd always scratch that itch
When you asked me for safe passage
On my shoulders where we slid
And just before you laid
Dead weight upon its shores
I stung you in the face
For that's the nature of my core



The Mars Volta is set to play Sept. 14 at the Sun Orpheum Theater in Boston.

The song continues with two more movements, one with more Spanish flair and African percussion, and then the band moves back to their roots with a hardcore-punk ending.

The next song, "Askepios," builds and falls and builds and falls with an eerie tension to it, highlighted by more of Bixler-Zavala's ear-piercing vocals.

"Ouroboros," the 10th track, is by far the heaviest song the band has ever produced. Distorted, palm-muted guitars climb high and low alongside the bass line while Bixler-Zavala actually brings his voice to a masculine level, only to be brought back up high for the catchy chorus, and then even higher for the extremely trippy breakdown.

The song ends with mellow keyboards which lead into the epic masterpiece, "Soothsayer."

The song opens with Middle Eastern-sounding string instruments. Upon entrance of Rodriguez-Lopez's guitars, the listener may experience a synthetic acid trip. Somehow, the guitar manages to sound similar to a sitar plugged into a wah pedal being rocked back and forth erratically.

"Soothsayer," meaning "one who predicts future events based on personal beliefs instead of common reasoning," is the pinnacle of "The Bedlam in Goliath"; all of the energy culminates here and explodes with Bixler-Zavala's poetic lyricism:

My love becomes a mange
dyeing autumn in its leaves

when it broke me in the branch
where my antlers come to feed
and I swam a hundred days
in the bosom of this filth
carry on this drought
as I tighten this belt

"The Bedlam in Goliath" was inspired by a Ouija board that Rodriguez-Lopez found in Jerusalem and gave to Bixler-Zavala as a gift. The board, which they called "Soothsayer," allowed three different entities, collectively known as Goliath, to communicate with the band. Goliath is supposedly responsible for many of the lyrics on the final track of the album, "Conjugal Burns."

During touring and writing the new album, strange things began to happen to the band including injuries, loss of band members, disappearance of recorded material, the flooding of the studio and the mental breakdown of the band's engineer, who held the band's studio hostage claiming, "You're trying to do something very bad with this record ..." The band attributed these misfortunes to the talking board and thus buried it in an undisclosed location.

"The Bedlam in Goliath" was released on both CD and on a limited-edition USB drive shaped as a Ouija planchette. The CD is well worth your cash, running just over 75 minutes in length and boasting talented musicians including John Frusciante of the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Don't miss this psychedelic rock movement!

Scholarship helps student build toward the future

Fitchburg State College student Sean R. Cruise, of Lakeville, was named the 2008 Daniel A. Mahoney Scholarship recipient during a recent presentation at the college.

J.M. Coull, Inc. President Andrew Coull, and Fitchburg State alumnus and current Coull project manager Mark Moschella presented Cruise with the \$1,000 scholarship.

Named for a longtime employee of J.M. Coull who exemplified professionalism in construction management, the Daniel A. Mahoney Scholarship will be given each year for five years to a qualified industrial technology/construction technology junior-year student. Coull, based in Maynard, offers construction management, design/build, and general contracting services.

"Sean's outstanding academics and professional skills exemplify the caliber of students in our program," said James Andrews, associate professor of industrial technology.

"This scholarship further solidifies our relationship with J.M. Coull and helps us in our mission of supporting construction technology professionals at Fitchburg State."

Moviegoers can't count on '21'

BY LEANNE BELGIORNO

With rising tuition and the student-loan crisis in the news, how is a student to pay for higher education?

Columbia Pictures "21" has a suggestion: Go to Las Vegas and win big in blackjack.

That's the premise of this PG-rated film, which was released just last month on DVD.

It stars Jim Sturgess as Ben Campbell, a working-class Massachusetts Institute of Technology student who has been accepted to Harvard Medical School but needs to raise \$300,000 for tuition.

Campbell and a group of his fellow MIT students – recruited and led by their math professor, Micky Rosa (Kevin Spacey) – learn to beat the casino odds with card-counting. The group travels to Las Vegas on the weekends and cheats the casino's system. Eventually, Campbell's growing greed and arrogance draw the attention of Cole Williams (Laurence Fishburne), a casino-security specialist who is determined to stop the group.

This movie was very disappointing, especially if you have read the book "Bringing Down the House: The Inside Story of Six MIT Students Who Took Vegas for Millions," by Ben Mezrich.

The movie used only one scene



When the chips are down, Ben Campbell (Jim Sturgess) turns to blackjack to earn his Harvard tuition.

from the original story: the "test run." In this scene, the group brings Campbell to an alleyway to test his new skills. Beyond that scene, the movie detaches itself from the book with a series of small but discouraging changes.

The book offered a very easy story to adapt to a movie, and yet they did not use it to its fullest extent.

The actors in "21" were not used to their fullest extent, either. Spacey and Fishburne, two

extremely seasoned and proven actors, basically play themselves. There were not any tweaks to their roles or certain characteristics that made the characters stand out.

The pacing of the 123-minute movie was also very distracting.

While some scenes were excruciatingly long, others were far too short. For example, when Campbell was deciding whether to join the group or not, there was not enough exposition to convince the audience of his decision. This section of the movie should have stretched further on, rather than being cut down into a few short scenes.

The narration was far too in-depth for the movie. Rather than allowing the actions of the characters to show the story, it simply told the audience what was happening. For example, at one point Campbell is standing on a balcony looking discouraged; the narration literally says, "I was sad." This was unnecessary and took away from the scene.

The movie's soundtrack was also very disappointing. It consisted of dated songs that were never truly in tune with the tone of the scenes. These songs were used in a series of bad montages that would stop for a minute to tell a joke and then start up again.

The ending was also very cliché and predictable, to the point where halfway through the movie you have guessed the twist.

All and all, "21" was a disappointing movie with mistakes too blunt and easily fixed to be forgivable.

Who could resist this new 'Horton' DVD?

BY LAUREN GREALLY

Dr. Seuss' "Horton Hears a Who" was a childhood favorite, and now, about 15 years since I had first read the book, I still love the story.

The animated movie version, which came out just last month on DVD, offers a great example of how a childhood story can stand the test of time and still entertain a college student.

Screenwriters Ken Daurio and Cinco Paul stay true to the 1954 Seuss classic, and 20th Century Fox Animation brings it to life with the same flashy and outrageous colors Seuss was famous for.

Jim Carrey lends his talents to voice Horton, the lovable elephant. His interaction with Steve Carell, the voice of The Mayor of Whoville, makes for very comedic conversations.

Wisecracks start right from the introductions, when the Mayor of Whoville tells Horton that he

"You just take care of that meatball, sir, and leave the freaking out to me."

- Horton

has 96 daughters and one son, at which Horton laughs, "Whoa! Busy guy!"

Teamwork is on the agenda, as well.

For example, when the Mayor of Whoville says, "Listen, Horton, I've gotta go. Apparently there's a problem with a giant meatball," Horton jumps right in to help. He tells the mayor, "You just take care of that meatball, sir, and leave the freaking out to me."

Directors Jimmy Hayward and



'Horton Hears a Who' shares the timeless message of Dr. Seuss' classic tale.

Steve Martino guide the other voices, including Carol Burnett, Will Arnet, Seth Rogen, Dan Fogler, Isla Fisher, Jonah Hill, Jesse McCartney, Jaime Pressly, Amy Poehler, and Joey King (the voice of my favorite character, Katie) just to name a few.

In the movie, Horton, in the Jungle of Nool, hears something on a speck.

He increasingly becomes obsessed with finding out what this speck is and why there are people on it, so he protects it from his neighbors.

No one else believes that Horton hears something on that speck, so he tries to get it to a safe place.

Horton goes through obstacles

set forth by Kangaroo (she wants the speck destroyed), until the residents of Whoville are heard and Horton's faithfulness is rewarded.

In the end, as the narrator expains, Horton teaches us all an important lesson: "A person is a person, no matter how small."

"Horton Hears a Who" gets a big thumbs-up.

It's rated G, and it really is a movie for all ages.

Game may just feel too real

BY ROBERT BARTOLOME

To the disgust of many protesters, communities, and even states, Grand Theft Auto IV became an instant blockbuster when it was released in May, with sales above \$500 million worldwide in the first week alone.

Just as the entire franchise has done, the game stretches boundaries and breaks just about every moral written. It has been banned in several countries, including Thailand, where earlier this month a teenage gamer killed a man while acting out one of GTA's carjacking scenes – the teen said he wanted to see how it felt in real life.

And in fact, as I played this most recent installment of Grand Theft Auto, I was often left with the question, "Is this *too* real?"

I step off the sidewalk and begin crossing the street when a beat-up, Honda-esque car slams into me, knocking me onto the ground. Niko, the main character that I control, slowly stumbles to his feet as the driver of the car, a young blond woman, runs over to help, screaming. Without hesitation, a pistol is pulled out and fires one round into her chest. She falls instantly to the ground, dead.

This is normal activity for all of the games in the series, and similar events take place during about 80 percent of gameplay. However, this time it made me feel a little different.

Seeing the woman's body fall to the ground actually made me feel ... bad.

This is partially due to the game's incredible graphics design. The streets teem with realistic-looking people and cars; buildings reflect sunlight, casting shadows everywhere; in the distance, planes can be seen



Street crime seems to take on a life of its own in Grand Theft Auto IV.

taking off and landing at the Liberty City airport. The entire experience is more real than any virtual city ever created.

Each citizen of Liberty City walks with a destination in mind, and in many cases I've witnessed funny or action-packed moments while simply standing around and

on an island of thousands.

Rockstar, the creator of the GTA franchise, always makes a point of licensing the best selection of music available, to supply the radio stations in the game. This could be the best soundtrack yet, mixing genres like classic rock, alternative, reggae, reggaeton, and hip-hop to make up over 150 songs.

One of the most interesting things comes out of Rockstar's new collaboration with Amazon.com. When you hear a song on the radio, you dial a number on your in-game cell phone, and within a few seconds you receive a text telling you the name of the track and the artist. All you need to do is go to Amazon's special GTAIV Download Store, and the song is waiting for you. It's both easy and quick, and has already stolen quite a few dollars from me.

Details such as that add a lot to the experience, but the real magic lies in the

gameplay and story.

At the start of the game, Niko Bellic lands in Liberty City on a boat, and you immediately take control. From then on, it is up to you to rise up the career ladder of success - illegally. You meet an eclectic cast of characters and face many choices that affect the outcome of the game.

The controls are about the same as previous titles, simple and fun, but they have improved a lot of issues. For example, the targeting system is much more developed and allows for a better gun-aiming experience. There are also some added controls, such as the ability to pick up pieces of garbage on the ground - cans, bottles, bricks - and throw them.

The most surprising addition is the option to turn a vehicle's high beams on and off. It proves absolutely pointless in the long-run, but it is really a lot of fun to flash cops as they drive by.

All in all, the Grand Theft Auto IV proves to be one of the top games of 2008, with amazing graphics, fun gameplay, a great soundtrack, and a well-crafted story. As long as you can move past all of the moral objections you might get from the realism of the game, it is entertainment at its finest!

The streets teem with realistic-looking people and cars; buildings reflect sunlight, casting shadows everywhere; in the distance, planes can be seen taking off and landing at the Liberty City airport. The entire experience is more real than any virtual city ever created.

watching passersby. Once, for example, I watched a man pick a fight with someone who bumped into him, and eventually get chased down and arrested by a nearby cop.

I've witnessed minor automobile accidents that have fueled major arguments. I've even seen people sitting on park benches, waiting for someone to meet them. The city lives and breathes, really creating the impression that you are merely one person

Knights shine at college

BY JOE WHITNEY

With classes, exams, jobs, internships, clubs, sports, and active social lives, college students have plenty to keep them busy. Yet some feel the need to do even more, to help others as well as themselves.

For Fitchburg State College student Pat Hegarty, the need to make a difference has led to membership in the Knights of Columbus. Hegarty believes firmly in the values the Knights advocate: "charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism."

In terms of charity, "The Knights do a lot for the community, such as collecting donations for special-needs children," Hegarty said.

Unity and fraternity? With 1.7 million members, the Knights of Columbus is the world's largest Roman Catholic fraternal-service organiza-

tion, and Hegarty said the bond between the Knights is very strong. "There is a great brotherhood among the Knights," he said. "You feel like you're a part of something special."

Patriotism? Knights volunteer in veterans' hospitals and organize programs, such as Treats for Troops, to support and show gratitude to the military.

Yet for all that the members do, Hegarty said, the Knights of Columbus organization does not require a great sacrifice. "Time is really the only thing you have to give up," said Hegarty.

And, he said, joining will not take huge chunks from your schedule: "Meetings take place about twice a month, and usually only last roughly 30 minutes," Hegarty said.

How does someone get his foot into a meeting? Member-



ship is open to practicing Catholic men over the age of 18.

Understanding and committing to the concept of the organization is key. "Your sponsor will speak on your behalf at the ceremony, saying that you are a good candidate at the first degree," points out Hegarty.

The Knights seem to run in the Hegarty family. Terry Hegarty, Pat's older brother, joined the organization first.

"I joined to become more involved in service projects," said Terry Hegarty. "I think the biggest reward is the fraternity, and getting to know a lot of different people."

No hospitality for teens?

BY KATE ROULEAU

Cassandra Ilfeld, a 19-year old student at Fitchburg State College, wasn't expecting any trouble when she planned a trip to Washington, D.C. She booked her flight with no problem, and then went online to book a hotel room.

Ilfeld found an inexpensive hotel that satisfied all her needs. But when she went to book the room on Hotwire.com, she read the following: "Primary guest must be at least 21 years old and present at check-in. The hotel will require a valid credit card in the primary guest's name. The credit card must include available credit for incidental expenses. Debit/check cards are not typically accepted."

In speaking with friends, Ilfeld found that others had noticed this policy, too – and were equally baffled by it. Why, they wondered, is it OK for college students under 21 to buy cigarettes, drive, and

even fight in a war, but not to book a hotel room?

When asked this question, a Hotwire customer-service representative had only one answer: "You have to be an adult or be accompanied by an adult."

The American Civil Liberties Union addressed this issue back in 2004, according to its website, when it "filed an age-discrimination lawsuit against a Detroit hotel that refused to rent a room to a 20-year-old Army Reservist and his 18-year-old girlfriend because they were too young."

Yet the practice persists, and travelers under 21 are left to read the fine print.

Not all online booking services have these restrictions. To book with Expedia.com, a person needs to be 17 or older; with Travelocity.com, there is no age limit listed.

Individual hotels' policies vary, too, so it's a good idea to make sure there's no 21-plus policy.

FSC education leads to Emmy nomination

Fitchburg State College alumna Melanie Perkins has received an Emmy nomination for her 2007 documentary "Have You Seen Andy?"

"It was wonderful news. It brought sense of justice in Andy's case," said Perkins, '91, who studied communications media at FSC. She is a 1984 Ayer High School graduate.

"Have You Seen Andy?" is up for the News & Documentary Emmy Award for Outstanding Investigative Journalism – Long Form. Other nominees in the category include an MSNBC investigation

"Mississippi Cold Case"; and the Oxygen channel's "Slave Girls of India" with correspondent Lisa Ling. The awards will be presented in a ceremony on Sept. 22 in New York City.

Perkins screened the film last year at Fitchburg State and in her hometown of Lawrence. She said her studies at FSC built a foundation for her film career. In fact, when Perkins found out about the Emmy nomination, she sent an e-mail announcement to a long list of people, including her former professor George Bohrer.

"The education there really set the

groundwork for me being able to accomplish what I have. Faculty helped you learn about the equipment and you had access to make a film right away," Perkins said. "They just put a camera in your hand and said, 'Go do it.' There wasn't a question about what anyone was capable of. They taught me that if you could put your mind to it, you could do anything."

The film, released in 2007 on HBO, is the personal story of a childhood friendship abruptly ended by abduction. One day in August 1976, 10-year-old Andy Puglisi was playing at the Higgins Memorial Pool

in Lawrence. Then suddenly, he disappeared. Twenty-two years later, filmmaker Melanie Perkins, Andy's childhood friend, began her search for answers.

Perkins' "Have You Seen Andy?" uncovers new information about the unsolved disappearance and the initial police investigation. The filmmaker's persistence forces the police to re-open the investigation after more than 20 years. As a child who grew up with Andy's family and friends, Perkins has privileged access to the people who knew Andy best. "Have You Seen Andy?" brings the viewer inside this unsolved case.

Capt. Anna Morgan, MD
Brooke Army
Medical Center, Texas

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